

Shrimp Task Force meeting minutes April 1, 2015

Baton Rouge, LDWF Headquarters

Meeting called to order at 1:12 p.m.

Voting Members Present

Acy Cooper- alternate for George Barisich
Clint Guidry
Lance Nacio
Mark Abraham
Alan Gibson
Andrew Blanchard
Eric Hansen

Voting Members Absent

George Barisich-Acy Cooper in for George

Alternate Members Absent

Byron Despaux
Lance Authement

Ex-Officio Members Present

Jack Isaacs
Chad Hebert
Lt. Col Sammy Martin

Ex-Officio Members Absent

Lance Broussard
Carrie Castille
Nicholas Cole

Motion to adopt March 10, 2015 meeting minutes by Andy Gibson, second by Andrew Blanchard.
Motion adopted.

Ashley Roth presented the financial report, including the fund activity since 2000.

Randy Pausina addressed the task force and encouraged them to work with LDWF to create a plan for how to spend some of their fund dollars.

Mark Abraham asked that it go on record that the task force will be spending significantly more of its funds within the next couple of years.

Motion to accept the budget as presented by Andrew Blanchard, second by Andy Gibson. Motion adopted.

Clint Guidry said that the marketing committee recommended option 3 that was presented by LDWF as an option for altering seafood eligibility requirements for the Louisiana Wild Seafood Certification Program. Option 3 calls for:

Removal of current eligible seafood, landed, processed and packaged in Louisiana and substitute with language that allows seafood to be eligible as long as it meets 2 out of the 3 original criteria (landed in Louisiana, processed in Louisiana or packaged and Louisiana. Seafood would have to be documented on trip tickets as harvested from the Gulf of Mexico.

Andrew Blanchard said he agrees with that but also wants us to create a premium brand that would be select head-on shrimp and the certification program could go to processing plants in Louisiana if they choose to put that on their packaging.

Motion by Andrew Blanchard made a motion to adopt Option 3 (seafood would be eligible as long as it meets 2 out of 3 criteria, landed in Louisiana, processed in Louisiana and processed in Louisiana). Second by Andy Gibson. Motion adopted.

Motion by Andrew Blanchard that there also be a premium program (maybe start with head-on) and that the marketing committee work with the industry to develop parameters for that. Lance Nacio asked that it be put into place before the Fall Season (August 1). Clint Guidry asked that this meeting be held in Houma. Second by Eric Hansen. Motion adopted.

Refrigeration Grant Program- the task force was presented with the 2015-2016 guidelines. Andy Gibson asked if we could increase the amount of time that someone "sit-out" after having received a grant and Jason Froeba said that they would be willing to hear any suggested edits that the shrimp task force had. Andy Gibson also asked if there was a way to increase the grant amount to the max \$30,000, Jason Froeba said they are willing to hear any recommendations, but they have a lot less money this year. Jason Froeba said that about 30% applied for the max amount, Andy Gibson said that he would like to see it increased for that reason. Jason Froeba said that the Department has to make the assumption that everyone will go for the maximum. An inquiry was made into the possibility of shortening the grant program, but Jason Froeba said that this year was the best year they have had as far as avoiding fraud so he discourages the task force from doing that.

Jason Froeba said that as soon as details are nailed down they want to give everyone a month's notice. They do try and do it on a fiscal calendar though and the fiscal year starts July 1. So it could be done, but we may want to delay it a little to give everyone enough notice. 300 people applied the last time and 80 grants were awarded. By not allowing used equipment that may decrease some of the numbers. The money doesn't have to be used every year for refrigeration grant programs.

Motion by Andy Gibson to amend the refrigeration grant guidelines so that anyone who has received an LDWF grant in the past 4 (not 3) years be excluded from participating in the program, and to put the max grant award amount to \$30,000 (not \$20,000). Second by Clint Guidry. Motion adopted.

Clint Guidry asked enforcement about hijacker enforcement and Lt. Col Sammy Martin said that they are going to enforce the law the way it is written and do the same for all parts of the state.

Lance Nacio suggested that the Audubon Group make a rules of the road laminated piece on typical infraction mistakes that shrimp fishermen make.

Mark Abraham said that they would like to repeal the TED non-enforcement rule (Title 56: 57.2) and then in two years they could revisit it.

Cole Garret said that they can do this in one or two bills. In section one they could repeal it and then in section 2 they could reinstate it two years from now.

Mark Abraham said that he didn't want it to automatically repeal it. Cole Garret said that could be done in Section 2, giving the task force the ability to review it.

Lance Nacio said that TEDs on skimmers works very well and how clean it makes the product. He said due to the law he is no longer in Whole Foods.

Acy Cooper said that they are going to fight putting TEDs on skimmers the whole way

Mark Abraham asked how enforcement will enforce this should it go into effect, Chad Hebert said that each enforcement agent on the coast has been trained by NOAA. Should it become a law, they will do a refresher course. Mark Abraham said that their biggest fear is that enforcement agents will not be experienced enough with training because every ticket they write will show that we aren't in compliance.

Motion by Andy Gibson to file a bill Repeal La. R.S. 56:57.2 (both sections) for a period of two years, after which time the Shrimp Task Force shall review the efficacy of the repeal and recommend to the Legislature whether to reinstate the prohibition of enforcement, or to permanently repeal. Second by Andrew Blanchard. Motion adopted.

Meeting adjourned.